

March 30, 1999

Shirley Ann Jackson
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Ms. Jackson:

I am writing concerning a recent Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) investigation of possible whistleblower retaliation and falsification of records at the Seabrook nuclear plant in New Hampshire. I am pleased that the NRC has investigated these serious charges, and hope that effective action will be taken to promote a safety culture and prevent any "chilling effect." According to a March 16, 1999 letter from A. Randolph Blough of NRC Region I to Mr. T.C. Feigenbaum of Seabrook Station (and described in a March 24, 1999 Boston Globe article by Alice Giordano, "NRC says Seabrook fired whistleblower"), on January 7, 1998 an electrician working for Williams Power Company, a Seabrook contractor, raised a safety concern regarding wiring of the control building air-conditioning system. This system is necessary both for the proper functioning of the plant controls and to prevent radiological exposure of control room operators in case of an accident at the plant. The worker was laid off on January 16, 1998, and an NRC investigation "revealed that the lay-off was an apparent deliberate act in retaliation for the employee raising this concern." In addition, the investigation found that documentation procedures for the electrical work "were willfully violated, creating a false record...to cover up the problem."

I would like to commend the NRC Office of Investigations Field Office, Region I, for its investigation of the Seabrook incident. I hope that if the investigation conclusions are confirmed, appropriate sanctions will be imposed on the licensee and on any responsible individuals. It is vital for safety at nuclear plants that employees be able to raise safety concerns without fear of retaliation and that records reveal, not cover up, any problems. Vigorous action by the NRC in this matter will help create a strong safety culture at Seabrook and at other plants, and will help prevent any chilling effect from this incident on other employees raising safety issues in the future.

Please keep me informed of any actions the NRC takes concerning these incidents, and please provide me a copy of the investigation report when it is available. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress